

THE BORDEN CASE: THE STRUGGLE FOR NEGRO RIGHTS IN BOSTON



Under the Fighting Leadership of
the L. S. N. R.



Price 10 cents

LEAGUE OF STRUGGLE FOR NEGRO RIGHTS

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INTRODUCTION

George H. Borden, a young Negro worker, was surprised at dinner in his cellar apartment with his family and a friend by two swaggering white men in civilian clothes. They were both armed, and they both gave the impression that they might be thugs; one said he was Motor Vehicle Inspector Everett Gardner, and that the man with him was a policeman. They had come to arrest Borden for driving without a license.

Borden, frightened by the appearance and the actions of the men, asked permission to go to an upstairs apartment to telephone a friend. He knew someone who might bail him out. The policeman, William Harmon, followed the janitor upstairs, his hand on his pistol. Finding nobody in the apartment, Borden was suddenly stricken with terror. He was without influential friends; he had been arrested once before for violating a minor traffic law and held for three days like a desperate criminal, incommunicado. He knew something of the workings of Law and Order, and he was afraid. Suddenly panicky, he made a dash for the back stairs and freedom.

Harmon fired. Borden ran to the basement, the policeman shouting and shooting. Gardner, who had waited downstairs, ran out into the yard to head off the harassed and frightened man. It was while Borden was in the act of lifting himself upward out of the basement window that Gardner shot him four times. These events took place Sunday, July 8, 1934.

There was one organization in Boston which was supposed to look after the interests of persons like Borden, that is, friendless persons who find themselves all at once overwhelmed by the brutal forces of society. That organization was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, headed by the colored lawyer Butler R. Wilson. There was a very weak branch of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and a Branch of the International Labor Defense.

The League weak as it was, acted immediately. Members went to see Borden's wife; they attempted to get a warrant for the arrest of the police-assailants. They interviewed witnesses. The head of the International Labor Defense was absent from the city. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People assumed its usual attitude of "watchful waiting", presumably to decide whether the case justified the Association's entering it.

A mass meeting, called jointly by the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the International Labor Defense, was held on the following Friday evening in Roxbury, where the police tried to intimidate the gathering by massing at the entrance and turning off the lights. At the very moment a speaker was denouncing these characteristic police tactics to the mass meeting of Negro and white citizens, word came that Borden was dead. That was Friday evening, July 13th.

From this mass meeting there was organized a new branch of the League of Struggle for Negro rights — a Roxbury branch, which was named George Borden, for the murdered man. It was this newly organized branch of the L.S.N.R. which, with the I.L.D., took charge of the funeral arrangements, assuming all responsibility for expenses. These organizations prepared for and conducted the largest public funeral of an ordinary worker that Boston had ever seen. It made a profound impression not only upon the Negro and white citizens, but upon the police, also. This pamphlet is made up of the speeches which were delivered at the funeral exercises and of a paper answering attacks of Butler R. Wilson, N.A.A.C.P. head, on the L.S.N.R. and the I.L.D.

E. G.

Boston, August 13, 1934.

Funeral Services

Introductory Remarks

By EUGENE GORDON, Pres. George Borden Branch, L.S.N.R.

Sunday's papers quoted one of our substantial and respectable colored citizens, Mr. Butler R. Wilson, as being deeply concerned about the activities of the "reds" in behalf of the common janitor, George Borden, and in behalf of George Borden's family. With his delicate and aristocratic hands uplifted in righteous horror, Mr. Wilson protested that he saw no reason why the body of this man should receive the kind of consideration that those whom he spoke of contemptuously as "reds" were giving it. The action of Borden's friends, common working men and women like himself, might stir up "race feeling", was the excuse given by Mr. Wilson for his objection.

Is this an occasion for answering or launching attacks, or is this an occasion for mourning? Before us there lies the murdered body of a Negro worker — murdered both because, being a Negro, he had no rights which the police, its allies, and its bosses, were bound to respect, and because, being a common janitor, an ordinary worker, he was without pull or prestige, or friends whose influence come from political parties or wealth. We who honor him here and now were unable to prevent the assassin's attack; we are able and shall fight to prevent attacks upon his character, upon the character of his family, and upon the character of the only friends his destitute wife and infant children have. These friends are the persons whom Butler Wilson sneers at as "reds": everybody is a "red" who actually organizes for a determined struggle for our most elementary human and citizenship rights. We are here to bid farewell to a worker from the ranks of those who, confused by the turmoil and the hardships of this life-long day to day battle even for the right to live, batter their poor heads against the stone walls of ruling-class oppression. Thus we are not here to mourn the death of George Borden; we are here to honor him, who, as one of us, must needs die in order to arouse us to action against this thing which threatens us all. We are met, therefore, as fighters rather than as mourners. George Borden's murder at the hands of our enemies shall not go unavenged! We declared it at the instant of his death last Friday night; we repeat it now with the vigor and assurance that organized strength gives us. This is an occasion both to answer attacks and to launch counter attacks; it is an occasion for taking the counter offensive against our enemies — the police and the whole brutal system of oppression and terror of which the police are a part and of which they are sworn and paid defenders.

We do not resent being called "reds" because we have begun a militant offensive against the forces that killed George Borden. Only a little while ago every Negro was without question disdainfully and scornfully labeled "nigger" and automatically classified as "inoffensive", or "loyal" or "good" — in short, as direct descendant of a meek and long suffering Uncle Tom — if he did not show resentment when the white bully spat in his face. He who labels and classifies us in that manner is a liar. Indeed, that sort of labeling and classifying is ceasing, even in the South where oppression and suppression of masses of Negroes are most ruthless and brutal. Among the great masses of Negro workers there is developing a militancy against hangovers of slavery, and a loyalty to their own class, which make them distinctly a new product of our social order. Out of the degradation and the suffering we have been forced to endure, we are developing a new kind of Negro: class conscious rather than "race" conscious, he sees and understands the common bond between him and the white worker. Being class conscious, he sees and understands the true friendships, genuine loyalties, unshakable solidarity, can be effected only among those who belong to a common class in society, owing to the fact that they take part in a common struggle against poverty and oppression.

This new kind of Negro, in short, identifies his interests with all other people who are degraded and oppressed, regardless of what their so-called "race" may be. That is why you see Negroes and whites side by side among class-conscious workers. That is why there have sprung up among these Negro and white workers a spirit of sympathy so keen and a sense of understanding so profound that neither police terror nor appeals to the ancient superstitions or "race" differences — superstitions which the class Butler Wilson worships strives desperately to keep alive — can drive them apart. As a matter of fact, these forces let loose upon us by the arrogant and domineering rich and powerful only weld us more firmly together. Thus, instead of creating that fictitious "race feeling" which Butler Wilson pretends to see in our honoring a murdered worker, our action completely undermines the foundation of and destroys "race feeling". Race hatred, being an artificial and man-made device to trick us with, disappears like a cube of ice in a July sun in the atmosphere of common working class solidarity that prevails among us.

But people who believe as we do and fight the common enemy together as we do — Negroes who have determined that they will no longer bend their backs like slaves and kiss the bloody hands that beat them — we Negroes are called "reds" by Butler Wilson and the police and their rich and powerful masters. Thus we learn the definition of the word "red"; thus we learn the definition of the term a "dangerous" or a "bad" Negro. A "red" is anybody who does not agree that it is patriotic and American to starve, to go naked, and to sleep in parks and doorways, when food is molding in storage or is being destroyed, when clothes are rotting in the stock rooms, and when great hotels and apartment houses are empty of tenants yet locked against the homeless. The man who merely speaks about these crimes against the masses of people is a "red".

A "dangerous" or "bad" Negro is one who will not submit to seeing his wife and daughters abused by men of influence and pull, and who avenges his fellow Negroes through organized, militant action. If these actions be characteristic of "reds" and of "bad" Negroes, let us be so classified. To Butler Wilson we readily accede the title of Gentlemen's Waiting Man, Uncle Tom, or Professional Kisser of Ruling Class Feet, a title for which he has persistently fought and of which he is justifiably proud.

Butler Wilson admits that the sole reason his organization entered the case was to check the influence of the "reds" among the Negro people; not for the welfare of the surviving family, not for the interest of these fatherless children, not for the life and death interests of the Negro people, not for one blow against the vile and putrid system which makes George Borden, Scottsboro, Herndon, and Mooney cases possible — inevitable. Oh, no! But against the "reds", whose very reason for existence is to fight against and destroy these things. Out of his mouth has he condemned himself!

So these ceremonies over the body of George Borden are the preliminaries of battle. They are not the muted tones of stricken mourners who will slink in silence to the wretched holes to which this society has consigned them. They are the actions and the voices of men and women prepared for conflict — not the conflict of race against race but of an oppressed race, and of an oppressed class, against the bloody-handed oppressors of the masses of working men and women and children, both white and black.

Funeral Services

"A New Day Is Here"

By DONALD BURKE, District Secretary, I.L.D.

Friends and Comrades:

We are gathered here today, beside the body of George Borden, to do him honor, to speak about why he died, and find the way to put an end to those things in society which brought him to this early, unnatural death.

George Borden is a victim of officially approved murder. He is a victim of the system which robs the masses — keeping a handful of millionaires rolling in wealth while the millions starve. He is the victim of the system which allows all of us no more than a life of insecurity, of poverty, of misery, war and death.

Why was he killed? Why, at the age of only 29, full of life, was he suddenly struck down and moves no more?

This question must be answered! It will be answered. Thousands — no millions of people have learned the answer — and are crying it aloud. Their shouts are rising not only here — in Boston — but thruout the South — thruout the North — more thruout the world!

George Borden was murdered for two reasons. First, because he is a Negro, and, second, because he is a worker.

If his skin were not black — he would not be dead.

If he were not of the working class — he probably would not be dead.

The man who killed George Borden is a government official. His act was an official act of the government. He has not been punished for this — rather the murder of George Borden has been approved and endorsed.

George Borden, Negro and Worker, has been murdered. This murder is linked with the slave market of old, with the whip, the brand, the chains, the whole rotten system of slavery. It rises from the time when any Negro slave could be beaten, tortured, sold away from family and friends, and killed, if the master so desired.

But slavery was abolished — so they say. Abolished — yes in words, in form — but the Negro people are still enslaved. 13 million Negro people, one tenth of the whole population of the U.S., altho called free men, are still oppressed, denied civil rights, social rights, and political rights. Negroes have no rights in the South — and very few in Boston.

What did life hold for this man who now lies dead. Was he a free man? NO!

Economically he was doubly exploited. As a member of the working class he was exploited, forced to work for capitalists, making them rich, while he grew poorer.

As a Negro — he was discriminated against. Refused the right to work on better paid jobs, barred from the professions, barred from skilled jobs, barred from employment.

What sort of home did he have. I wish that it were possible for every one of you to see his home. A basement flat, entered thru an alley. Dark, damp, unhealthy. There are supposed to be laws against living in basements, — but they do not apply to the poor, who must live in basements.

Three little children, playing on the cold cement floor. His wife, helpless now with him gone. His family also workers, as poor as he.

Socially he had no rights. Discriminated against in schools, in hotels, in restaurants, in theatres, on railroads, on interstate busses, in clubs, at beaches, at summer resorts, and even in churches — where all are supposed to be of one flesh and blood!

Politically, he had the right, perhaps, to vote. But what did it net him? The Republican and Democratic Parties fooled him with all kinds of promises, very fine promises, but always and everywhere continued to oppress his people.

The Socialists also made him promises, perhaps he voted for them — but they also have no intention to liberate the Negro People.

His brother in the South — the 10 million Negroes who live below the Mason Dixon line, have no right at all, neither economic, social or political.

Lynching, terror, daily attacks, Ku Klux Klan and other boss recruited fascist gangs — all striving to keep the Negro people down! Yes — for George Borden — life was not sweet!

I have said before that if George Borden were not a worker, he **probably** would not be dead. I said that because there are some Negroes who have escaped the terror a little.

Those are the rich Negroes, those who have become rich in most cases by robbing their own brothers, those who have made themselves big by selling out to the **white Wall Street bosses!**

They are the ones who are always telling us — “have faith in the courts, the law will protect you — it is best for the colored people to know their own place — stay away from those reds!”

If one of these rich Negroes, who don't live in basements, but in fine homes, had been the one to violate the motor vehicle law, Motor Vehicle Inspector Gardner would not have committed murder!

Gardner would have respected their money and recognized one of his own kind!

But — just the same — rich or poor — Negroes remain members of an oppressed people. And so long as this oppression continues, it will be impossible for any Negro to be completely free!

This murder shows that the conditions in the South are spreading North! Lynching, burning, rape of Negro girls, attacks of all kinds face us here — more every day. When we say Scottsboro Boys in Alabama, George Borden in Boston — we say just that. The terror is growing — Why?

Because it is part of the general growth of fascism in the United States. The rights of all people, most of all of the workers, are being taken away. Strikers are being killed by police, soldiers, and company gangsters. Free speech is suppressed. The social, economic, and political rights which we are guaranteed by the Constitution are being wiped out.

We are heading toward a Hitler government in the U.S.

This will mean the most open, brutal, terrorist dictatorship of Wall Street. It will mean that all democratic rights will be smashed!

But the Negro people will be the worst sufferers! As in Germany, where the Jewish people have been attacked, beaten, jailed, tortured, driven from their jobs or professions, the Negro people in this country will be and are being attacked with the growth of fascism.

The murder of George Borden, the effort to burn the nine innocent Scottsboro Boys in the electric chair, the sentencing of Angelo Herndon, young Negro organizer of the Atlanta, Georgia, unemployed, to the chain gang for 18-20 years, the shooting of Negro miners and share croppers in Alabama, the Victory frame-up in Detroit, the Crawford case, the recent James Coles case in Springfield, are all part of the wave of terror growing against the Negro people.

This terror **can, must, and will be stopped.** This is the program of action of the **International Labor Defense**, for which I speak, of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, and of the Communist Party.

It is not the white workers, farmers, and poor people generally who are responsible for the oppression, racial prejudice, and attacks upon the Negro people.

The white workers have been pumped full of lies — have been taught to believe they are superior, that white and black are not born free and equal. **WHO HAS TOLD THESE LIES? — IT IS THE RICH!** Through their newspapers, thru the churches, schools, radio and movies, they have poured out tons of rot about race superiority. **IT IS NOT TRUE!** We are all brothers — white, black, brown and yellow. Race differences are only in our skins and features — otherwise we are **ONE AND THE SAME.**

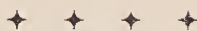
My friends, comrades, we are all united here today in our hatred for those responsible for the death of this victim of officially approved murder. White and black are here together. White and black have marched side by side, protesting

unitedly against this crime — and more — against the whole system of racial oppression.

Our unity, our demonstration, our united action to force the government to take action on the demands we have made — above all our building of solid organizations — the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the International Labor Defense — these are guarantees that a NEW DAY IS HERE. We can see, now, that race barriers will be broken. Unity of white and black workers is growing, spreading, not only in the North, but in the South, smashing the lynch traditions, uniting white and black workers and farmers in one united movement to end poverty, misery, hunger, war, and death, our common lot under this system.

Let not his death be in vain. This day must see the beginning in Boston of such a mighty united struggle as will free the Scottsboro Boys, free Angelo Herndon, smash lynching, once and for all, free the victims of boss class terror in all lands, break down all national and racial barriers, and some day build a new society where all men will be free.

George Borden's children **must**, and **will** grow up and see the day when all men throughout the world will be free!



Who Are the Real Fighters for Negro Rights?

According to a statement which the Boston Post attributed to Butler R. Wilson, president of the decadent local of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the "Communists" "interested themselves in behalf" of George Borden, murdered Negro janitor, "for money and new recruits" they expected to get. We quote from that newspaper: "In criticizing the Communistic tactics, which he said are being used to exploit their own party, Mr. Wilson said his own organization would seek justice for Borden, but not at the expense of law and order." The Post quotes Mr. Wilson as saying further that the lying of George Borden's body in state, with its honor guard of Negro and white workers, was wrong, because it "might stir up race feeling." The newspaper continues: "If the evidence justifies it," Mr. Wilson said, "we will ask for the removal of both officers involved in the shooting and may present evidence to the district attorney to ask for an indictment." Butler R. Wilson has not only denied that he made the statement which the Boston Post said he made; Butler R. Wilson has called in reporters from all the daily newspapers — all of which papers are hostile to the "Communists" — and, in the name of his moribund organization, he has issued one grand ukase after another. In each of these utterances he has said substantially what the Post quoted him as saying. We feel, therefore, that we are correct in assuming that the story in the Boston Post was a true one; assuming its truth, we shall analyse Mr. Wilson's statement on that basis.

The Role of the LSNR

"The Communists interested themselves in behalf" of George Borden "for the money and for new recruits" they hoped to get. Who are these "Communists", with their nefarious schemes? We will tell you who they are. They are the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, an organization made up of Negro and white **working** people and their friends and sympathizers. They are small business men, some professional men and women, a number of high-school and college students, and newspapermen, janitors, chauffeurs, and cooks. The mass of its membership is working-class, and its leadership is a working-class leadership. Some of these persons do not belong to the Communist Party, because they do not appreciate its true role in behalf of the toiling masses of people. It is incorrect, therefore, to speak of the L.S.N.R. as "Communist" or "red". There are Communists in the organization, of course, just as there are in every other body of working people who are actually militant in demanding their rights and against those who oppress them.

How does the League of Struggle for Negro Rights fight, and for what does it fight? The League fights against lynching and all the forms of terror, violence, and abuse from which Negroes in this country have suffered; and it fights against these various forms of terrorization whether those who are responsible for them be officers of the law, organized murder gangs, or any individual person. The League fights for the unqualified right of Negroes to vote, to elect officials, to hold public office, and to sit on all juries. The League fights for the immediate improvement in the living conditions of Negro workers. It fights on the side of the Negro small farmers, renters, and sharecroppers. It fights for the right of self-determination of the Negroes in the Black Belt. It fights for immediate improvement in the housing and living conditions of Negro workers; for improvement in the cultural conditions of the masses of Negroes; for abolition of discrimination against Negro professionals, students, artists, writers, clerks, small business people, nurses, etc.; for complete social, economic, and legal equality for Negro women (including repeal of all laws prohibiting intermarriages); for the abolition of all jim crowism and discrimination of Negroes in all branches of the service — army, navy, marine corps, etc., with complete equality with the whites in all these branches. The League of Struggle for Negro Rights fights for all the rights of Negro youth — for equal pay for equal work; against night work and work at dangerous occupations for youths under 21; against forced labor in training camps, etc.; for the right of Negro athletes to participate in all athletic games with white athletes, including rowing, swimming, intercollegiate basketball and football, and major league baseball; for effective legal protection for Negroes in all walks of life; for the right openly to advocate, and to conduct propaganda everywhere for, all these rights, in public meetings, press, and through all possible mediums; for the right of the Negro people to organize in the struggle for these rights.

The Role of the I.L.D. and the Communists

Who are these "Communists" whom Butler R. Wilson slanderously accuses of being interested in the suffering of Negro worker only because they hope to get "money and new recruits"? We will tell you who they are. They are the International Labor Defense, a working class defense organization that bases itself on the continuous struggle that persists between those who work and those who boss, between those who work and those who leech, between those who work and those who grab and profit from the products of the workers' toil. (Ah, says Mr. Wilson. There you are! There's **proof** that it's "red"!) Its membership is composed of masses of workers, and of their sympathizers and friends, workers predominating. "The I.L.D. organizes for **mass** struggle against capitalists justice in all forms," it says of itself, adding: "The I.L.D. has no illusions about the 'fairness' of ruling class courts, judges, sheriffs, police. It exposes their role as agents of the ruling class and organizes the only effective defense against them — mass protest, mass pressure, mass defense." Not only that, but "**The I.L.D. fights against national oppression and lynchings** of Negroes. It organizes the masses for protest against jim crow violation of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States."

Who are these "Communists" whom Butler R. Wilson slanderously accuses of being interested in the suffering of Negro worker only because they hope to get "money and new recruits"? We will tell you who they are. Among them are members of the Communist Party itself, that most class-conscious section of the working class organized as the very vanguard of the workers as a whole, its function being to lead the working class in its day to day fight for immediate needs, and to educate the working class to its necessity of struggling for **their own government**.

There you have the facts of who these "Communists" are who interested themselves in the George Borden case. Quite a bunch of criminals, aren't they? Well, the workers do not think so! These so-called "Communists" are themselves mostly workers; those who are not workers, in the strict sense of that word, are so closely allied with workers and their problems that they are the workers' loyal friends and active sympathizers.

Whose Statements Will You Believe?

These "Communists", says Mr. Butler R. Wilson, "interest themselves in behalf of George Borden," murdered Negro janitor, "for the money and for new recruits" they hoped to get from activity in the case. These "Communists" did get money, but they got it from among themselves and their friends. They got it in dribblets of pennies, nickles, and dimes. They got it in pledges from a few well-to-do friends and sympathizers who know that the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the International Labor Defense are using the only correct tactics in fighting this monstrous thing which ruling class America has turned loose among the Negro and the white workers in the hope of destroying their growing unity and of crushing them. And what did these "Communists" do with the money — with the pennies, the nickles, and the dimes — when they got it? They arranged a decent burial for George Borden, the man whom Mr. Wilson's Law and Order had murdered. With these dribblets of petty change they took the burden off the murdered man's widow, who, with her three infants, was overwhelmed with the realization that she could not afford to pay for her husband's burial. On account of the miserable wage he got as janitor, Borden's insurance had lapsed. He could not carry it longer. The "Communists", whom Butler R. Wilson hates with blind fury, took the worry of this necessary expense from the widow; they shouldered it themselves. Right now, every one of these "Communists" is making sacrifices in his own daily life in order to finish paying the obligation they assumed. It is a strange thing, but these hateful, double-dealing, trouble-making "Communists" are men and women of their word. Many workers long ago found **that** out, so depend upon them, trust in them. Mrs. Borden knew from the first that she could depend wholly on them. She knew that she would no longer have to worry about money for her husband's funeral. And the "new recruits"? The actions of these "Communists" are their best propaganda among the Negro workers. "New recruits" poured in. As a result of the influx of "new recruits", we have been able to found a George Borden branch of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights in Roxbury, a new weapon in the hands of Roxbury Negroes in fighting that "law and order" of Mr. Wilson's which took George Borden's life and left a mother without a husband and three infant children without a father.

Whose statements are you willing to believe, those of Butler R. Wilson, an effete, middle-class, "respectable" Colored man who is barely identified with the Negro as such and is totally aloof from the Negro as a worker, or the statement from the literature of these organizations — the L.S.N.R. and the I.L.D. — which organizations, made up mostly of Negro and white **workers, know** what the interests of these workers are and how best to serve them? Whose statements, we ask, **will you believe?** The answer is clear, even as these words are being written. We know that you will not accept the statements of Butler R. Wilson — except for what they are: the slanderous vaporings of a decrepit old mind the last efforts of which are being expended in behalf of "our good white friends" (a characteristic phrase of his), the most notorious exploiters of the poor and the friendless.

What Is the NAACP?

We continue our analysis of Mr. Wilson's newspaper interview. "In criticizing the Communistic tactics, which he said are being used to exploit their own party, Mr. Wilson said his own organization would seek justice for Borden, but not at the expense of law and order." So! His organizations would "seek justice", "but not at the expense of law and order"! What is this grand and noble organization, this venerable but powerful organization, which "would seek justice" for the murdered man, "but not at the expense of law and order"? We will tell you, comrades and friends, what this organization is. It is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Boston's own historic and vital branch. What is the N.A.A.C.P.? How does it work? What does it do? I quote from the Association's own 21st annual report (emphasis being mine):

"Branches of the Association exist in every State in the Union, excepting Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Idaho, and North Dakota. Interracial in nature in

many places, these branches are officered by men and women in every walk of life, but, all devoted to the cause of winning for the Negro his full rights as a citizen and man. Some of the branches are officered by individuals of national and international prominence; others by humble underadvantaged folk.

"All these branches are united to the great parent body to which they give a large part of its support, cooperation in its national work, and information and data concerning matters which affect the Negro. They receive from the National Body guidance, over-sight, stimulation, material assistance of funds and legal counsel in cases beyond their power and of sufficient importance.

"In their local work, the Branches **conduct propaganda** against segregation and discrimination **through all sorts of meetings with colored and white people**; handle cases **through arbitration and the courts**, if necessary; **open up new opportunities for Negroes**; stimulate the **cultural life** among them; train the young in the methods and principles of the Association; and develop a **fair and closer relationship between the two races.**"

Too Nice To Fight

What, precisely, does all this mean? It means that the Nice Association for the Advantage of Certain Persons has a top-stratum leadership of nice, respectable colored and white ladies and gentlemen, but a rank and file membership wholly of Negroes; that the branches of the Association depend upon the "National Body" not only for directives and money but for even their "stimulation", a quality which the L.S.N.R. and the I.L.D. acquires from the reality of the day to day struggle of the exploited masses of workers; that the branches — that the Boston branch, for instance, headed by Butler R. Wilson — express their magnificent devotion to winning the Negroes' rights by conducting "propaganda" "against segregation and discrimination through all sorts of meetings with colored and white people", selling out, where possible, outside of court, and selling out inside the courts where outside treachery is impossible. Let those who seek a deeper understanding of this declaration read the shameful, the disgraceful, conduct of the Crawford case, in Virginia, by the N.A.A.C.P.; a case in which the N.A.A.C.P. lawyers referred to Crawford, the Negro worker they were "defending", as a poor, homeless dog, in order to win the court's "sympathy" for the man! The N.A.A.C.P. statement means, finally, that the Association aims to "develop a fair and closer relationship between the two races."

Decent housing for the masses of working Negroes? No! Death penalty for lynchings? No! For the immediate abolition of all restrictions against the Negro's right to vote, to elect officials, to hold public office, and to sit on all juries? Oh, no, no! For complete equality of Negro wage workers with white wage workers in wages, hours of labor, and working conditions? For the actual enforcement of the right of Negroes to work at any job, in all trades, industries, and professions? For unemployment and social insurance at the expense of the government and employers, without discrimination against Negroes? For the abolition of all forms of debt slavery, peonage, landlord supervision of crops, overseeing, and the system of plantation stores? For abolition of residential segregation, and the unrestricted freedom of Negroes to live wherever they choose? For mass resistance against evictions? For mass boycott of proprietors who raise rents upon reletting from white to Negro tenants, or who neglect the upkeep and maintenance of sanitary conditions of their property after renting to Negroes? The Nice Association's one and blanket answer to all these questions is a refined and nasty-nice "Why, of course not!"

Gentleman's Negro

There we have the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This is the organization which, headed by Butler R. Wilson, the lawyer, would "seek justice for Borden, but not at the expense of law and order." Who is this Butler R. Wilson, anyway? By what right does he speak of justice for a poor Negro janitor? Born in Georgia more than 60 years ago, he was graduated some 20-odd years later from Atlanta University and, coming to Boston, was graduated from the

law school of Boston University. From his earliest days in Boston he has moved, like the rare and ultra-exclusive bird that he is, only in the stratosphere of Colored "aristocracy": that social stratum among which one finds **no** person who has fewer than one butler, or one gentlemen's waiting man, or one lady's maid on his family tree. We do not condemn Wilson and his Colored friends for trying so desperately to escape the death grip of the slave octopus, whose slimy tentacles trail the American Negro wherever he goes in this country. We condemn them because, in trying to escape this shame, — these tentacles with their stench of slavery, — Wilson and his friends desert the masses of Negroes **who have not been able to escape**. Both in his public and in his private life Butler R. Wilson has striven to exemplify the N.A.A.C.P.'s policy of developing "a fair and closer relationship between the two races." He has done it by getting as close as possible to "our good white friends" of the upper class; close enough to kiss the feet that trample upon the rights of workers and to lick the hands that occasionally extend a "donation" to keep the Association on its last tottering old legs. This "fair and closer relationship between the two races" does not apply to the Negro and white workers. Note how quickly Wilson cries "Communist" when the **workers** of "the two races" come together.

"In criticizing the Communistic tactics, which he said are being used to exploit their own party, Mr. Wilson said his own organization would seek justice for Borden, but not at the expense of law and order." What are "Communistic tactics"? They are the rallying of Negro and white workers in mass protest, for the exerting of mass pressure, against the official condonation of a cold-blooded murder of a Negro whom the officials thought had no influential friends. Action of this sort, used effectively in the case of the Hitler defendants in the Reichstag fire frame-up, in the Scottsboro case, in the Herndon case, in scores of other cases involving workers, has come to be known among the enemies of workers as "Communistic tactics." Let them call such action what they will. It is effective. It works. It worked in the case of George Borden. It was only after the "Communists", with their "tactics", had given notice that the case was not closed, as the Ku Klux Judge Hayden said it was, that the court and the police did a smart about-face and took action against Borden's killer and the killer's accomplice, Harmon. Here is one instance of the effectiveness of "Communistic tactics." You who read this pamphlet can think of scores of other instances, in this case alone.

"Perhaps", "When and If"

These "Communistic tactics", Mr. Wilson said, were being used by the naughty Com-MU-nists to "exploit their own party". He proceeded immediately (although belatedly, because he was doubtful, until the L.S.N.R. and the I.L.D. entered the case, whether it was respectable enough for the Nice Association to handle) — he proceeded immediately to exploit his own pitiful little ghost of an organization by announcing importantly what "we" intend to do "when and if" the case warrants it, and so on. Even when the chance presented itself for him to exploit the N.A.A.C.P., which certainly needed exploiting if it was to drag out another six months of its useless life, he hedged his actions about with "ifs" and "whens", with "mays" and "perhapes." He was afraid that some of "our good white friends" might object, and withdraw a juicy handout. If by "exploit" Mr. Wilson meant "to make use of", it is enough to say that the organization which conducted the funeral did not find it necessary to go to unusual lengths, or to go out of its way one step, to "exploit" itself. The newspapers, with the help of Butler Wilson, were excellent mediums of propaganda.

"Mr. Wilson said his own organization would seek justice for Borden, but not at the expense of law and order." What a stupid giveaway! No sooner does he finish condemning the "reds" for wishing to "exploit their own party", than he announces his intention of exploiting "his own organization." It is clear that what Wilson feared most was that these youthful and militant organizations, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the International Labor Defense, were about to take charge in a situation such as the N.A.A.C.P. used to fool around with, drawing in big "donations"

from such of "our good white friends" as saw the usefulness of a mild and inoffensive reformist organization with a mild and inoffensive Uncle Tom at its head.

Mr. Wilson's Hypocrisy

He shows his insincerity in the assertion that his organization's seeking of "justice" will not be at the expense of "law and order." He shows insincerity in that he knew, when he made the statement, that "law and order" had been suspended by the very persons who were supposed to uphold it. "Law and order", yet a warrant had just been refused in Hayden's court for arrest of the murderer! "Law and order," yet the very men who are sworn to uphold law and order, the police, had turned out the lights a few nights previously when speakers were holding an orderly protest meeting against official callousness and brutality. "Law and order," when the Negro, the most lawabiding and most orderly person in the United States, considering how little protection the law has given him since slavery, is murdered by the law, and, by force, compelled to be orderly in the face of this murder. Butler R. Wilson knows, being the wily lawyer that he is, that his method is safe and sane for the ruling class; that it involves no possibility of stirring up "race feeling." Those whose feelings Mr. Wilson would spare are, of course, "our good white friends", not the workers. Mr. Wilson and his associates in the N.A.A.P.C. do not want his "good white friends" to feel uneasy about an uprising of "red" Negroes. His "friends" look to him, as their trusted agent, to see that nothing of the kind happens in Boston. He knows also that the very action of the white and the Negro workers — their laying Borden's body in state and standing a guard of honor around it — did more to cement the ties that bind Negro and white workers together than anything else he has seen in Boston. The "race feeling" he feared and fears is that which comes from the solidarity of ranks of black and of white working men and women; that feeling of oneness, in which a mere incidental like "race" is completely forgotten in the recognition of one common end: to defeat the common enemy.

"If the evidence justifies it," Mr. Wilson said, "we will ask for the removal of both officers involved in the shooting and may present evidence to the district attorney to ask for an indictment." That was before he knew what the L.S.N.R. and the I.L.D. were going to do, but suspected that they were going to fight it to a finish. He was stalling for time. He did not wish to go so far, hence his saying "if the evidence justifies it", and "we may present evidence to the district attorney". He knew that we had already gathered enough evidence to justify a trial for first degree murder; he knew that the asking for the removal of the men "involved in the shooting" was no punishment. He dared not go further, lest he jeopardize his own class position: he would have some explaining to do to "our good white friends" if he went farther in meeting the challenge of the "Communists." His position, in other words, was that of a typical Uncle Tom Negro, a typical gentleman's Negro, the function of whom is to placate the militant Negro and to head off any movement by which Negroes appear to be consolidating with the whites for determined, working-class, mass action.

Fight For Negro Rights!

The League of Struggle for Negro Rights has entered Roxbury to stay. It is here to fight for the most elementary rights of the Negro people of this district. We urge you to look upon L.S.N.R. as **your** organization, as your weapon, in this bloody fight against your class enemy, the white rulers and all their tools — their police, their courts, their newspapers, their whole oppressive system of brutal "law and order." There is no enemy too big for the L.S.N.R. to fight; there is no Negro worker too "insignificant" for the L.S.N.R. to fight for. In the sight of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, there is no Negro worker who is an insignificant person.

Stand up and fight for Negro rights in Boston!

Join the League of Struggle for Negro Rights!

**EXECUTIVE BOARD, GEORGE BORDEN BRANCH
LEAGUE OF STRUGGLE FOR NEGRO RIGHTS**